the
Cleo
Rogers

Memorial
County
Library

Architecture, Landscaping, and Biographical Notes

The Cleo Rogers Memorial County Library was designed by the New York firm, I. M. Pei and Partners, Architects. Kenneth D. B. Carruthers was the Architect-in-Charge of Design and Production.

The design may best be described as a civic space in conjunction with a public library facility. The closing of Lafayette Street permitted the juxtaposition of the new library with the Irwin Home and Gardens and Eliel Saarinen's First Christian Church.

The library building is a sculptural brick pavilion formalized by the east and west walls and cornice, rising from a brick plaza with courtyards cut out of the plaza, bringing daylight to the lower level. An integral concrete coffer slab and brick bearing wall construction are the main features of the design.

The landscaping features a brick and concrete plaza with urban tree planting. The view of the First Christian Church campanile has been retained, and the open space of the immediate library area is contrasted with the tree lined streets which approach it.

Ieoh Ming Pei is one of America's foremost architects and the recipient of many awards for outstanding achievements in architectural design. Among projects by I. M. Pei and Partners are the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts: the National Center for Atmospheric Research, Boulder, Colorado; the Dallas City Hall, Dallas, Texas; the prototype design for a standard air traffic control tower for the Federal Aviation Agency.

Kenneth D. B. Carruthers, Architect-in-Charge of Design and Production, was born in Montreal, Canada, and received his B. of Arch. degree from McGill University. In addition to the Cleo Rogers Memorial County Library he has also served as Architect-in-Charge of Design for the National Airlines Terminal at John F. Kennedy International Airport.

Regional Center

The Cleo Rogers Memorial County Library serves as a regional library for the Library of Congress Divisions for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Recorded and embossed books and magazines provided under the Federal program are distributed to the blind and physically handicapped throughout a 12-county area. Talking books on records and magnetic tapes, as well as selected talks in braille, are available to those who qualify for this type of library service.

Services

Main Floor

The Browsing Area is located on the main floor through the main entrance from Fifth Street. Recent fiction and non-fiction, current issues of magazines and newspapers, book displays and the library collection of 16mm sound and 8mm silent films are available in this section. Also in this area are the circulation desk and the central work core for the circulation and reference staff.

The Reference Area is immediately beyond the Browsing Area at the east section of the main floor. A separate reference desk is maintained and space is provided for 10,500 volumes including back issues of magazines, microfilm, telephone directories and specialized publications in many subject fields. Qualified librarians are on duty to assist patrons in finding reading and research materials. A teletype hookup with 26 other Indiana libraries is a special service of the reference department. The card catalog is located adjacent to this area.

Stairs and elevator leading to the lower level and to the mezzanine are centrally located along the north wall on the main floor.

Mezzanine

The Fine Arts Department, located on the mezzanine above the Reference Area, contains books on art, music, photography and related arts, circulating records, listening tables for phonograph players, and circulating art prints.

Administrative Offices are on the north and south walls of the mezzanine.

Lower Level

The Adult Stack Area on the lower level houses the library's less recent adult fiction and non-fiction and is to be used for future expansion of services and the book collection.

The Extension Department is to the west of the Adult Stack Area. The Extension Department contains the collection of books for the Hope Branch, Bookmobile and stations. The Bookmobile is a free public service to residents of Bartholomew County and offers a variety of books for adults and children, carrying 2,400 volumes with a yearly circulation of 125,000 books. It is in operation five days a week and schedules may be obtained at the main library, Hope Branch or Bookmobile. Also located in this area is the Staff Lounge, the Bookmobile Garage, and the power plant.

The Technical Services Department has a separate area next to the Extension Department. Cataloging and processing of all library materials take place here. Over 6,000 books, records, films and art prints are received and prepared for circulation each year.

The Children's Room is north of the Adult Stack Area, and it will accommodate 40 children at tables and chairs. A collection of over 10,000 books is maintained for the enjoyment of young people from pre-school age through eighth grade. Windows along the north side overlook a terrace which is for the enjoyment of the children. In addition, a separate entrance is provided on the west side of the building. The library offers special events for children, including a program of stories, movies and record programs for their enjoyment throughout the year.

Meeting Rooms

On the east side of the lower level are a multi-purpose meeting room and a small meeting room for the use of community groups. The multi-purpose room will seat 1[illegible] people and is equipped with a sliding r[illegible] view projection screen. Kitchen and restroom facilities are provided.

The total book capacity of the Cleo R[illegible] Memorial County Library is 175,000 volumes and there are approximately 54,000 square feet of floor space.

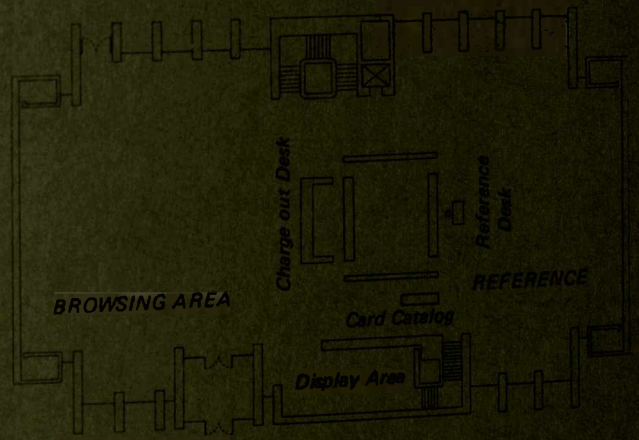
Borrowing Materials

Any resident of Bartholomew County is eligible for a borrower's card, free of charge. The card entitles the borrower to use the services of the library including those of the bookmobile and Hope Branch.

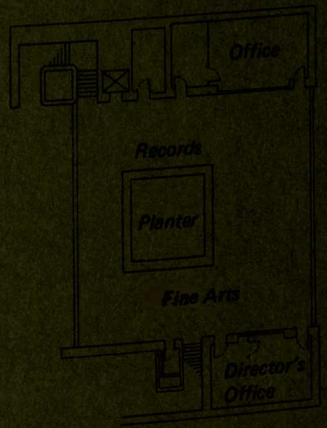
Books and records are loaned for 14 days. Renewals are granted provided the books have not been reserved by others during the loan period.

Films may be borrowed for 24 hours while special loans are arranged for art prints.

Library Floor Plan

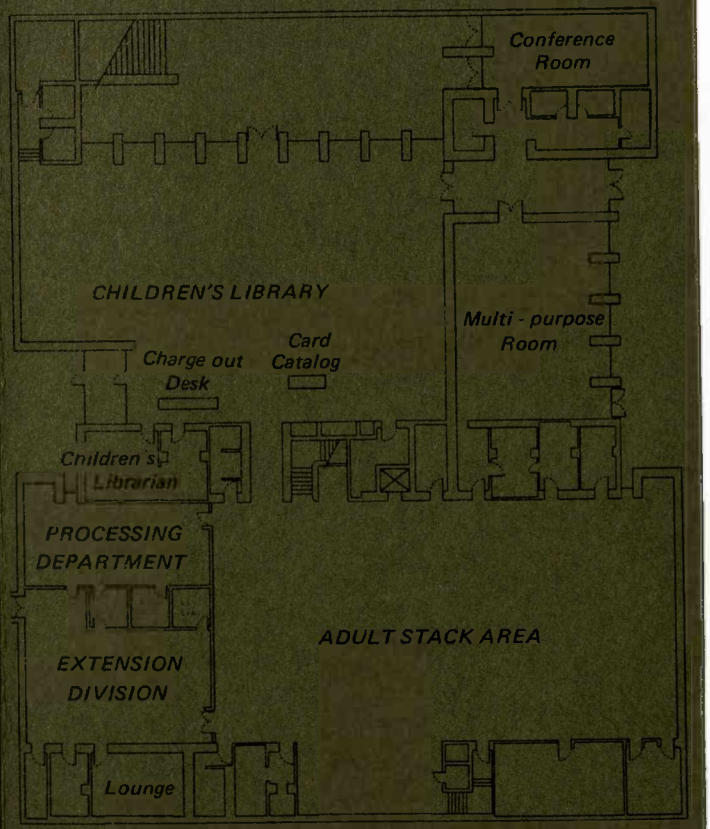


Main Floor



Mezzanine

Lower Level



History

Library service in Bartholomew County began in 1855 when the citizens of Columbus organized their first library with a $400 gift from William McClure.

In August of 1894 a public library fund was created by the school board who then directed the library activities, and in 1899 two rooms in the City Building were designated for library services. By 1901 the library had well outgrown its facilities, and with the help of a Carnegie grant of $15,000 a new building was constructed in 1903.

Service was extended to county residents in 1922 and the following year the library became known officially as the Columbus-Bartholomew County Library. Under the provisions of the 1947 Indiana Library Law, responsibility was transferred from the school board to a separate board of control in 1959.

Almost immediately after the reorganization, planning began for a new building, culminating in 1963 with the selection of I. M. Pei as architect.

Funds for the new library were obtained through a bond issue, private donations and federal money, and in November, 1966, construction began.